

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 ARAE-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

SCCT-02 SY-04 SCA-01 AID-20 FBIE-00 A-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 DRC-01 USSS-00 CCO-00 IO-14

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O 301800Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1600

S E C R E T SANTO DOMINGO 4004

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC

SUBJECT: PAO KIDNAPPING; CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT

1. FOLLOWING ARE MAIN SUBSTANTIVE POINTS OF HOUR LONG
CONVERSATION WHICH MY SPANISH AND VENEZUELAN COLLEAGUES AND
I HAD WITH PRESIDENT THIS MORNING.

(A) PRESIDENT CATEGORICALLY RE-AFFIRMED THAT HIS GOVERN-
MENT WOULD DO NOTHING RASH (HINGUNA LOCURA") THAT MIGHT IN
ANY WAY JEOPARDIZE THE SAFETY OF THE HOSTAGES. RASH ACTION,
HE SAID, WOULD RESULT IN A MASSACRE.

(B) HE WOULD GIVE IMMEDIATE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE POLICE
TO PERMIT LARGER QUANTITIES OF WATER AND CHANGE OF CLOTHING TO
ENTER THE VENEZUELAN CONSULATE.

(C) HE APPROVED THE TEXT OF MY REPLY TO HUTCHISON'S TWO
LETTERS (SEPTEL) WHICH COULD BE TRANSMITTED BY MONSEÑOR POLANCE.

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(D) I DESCRIBED TO PRESIDENT REQUEST MADE BY MENDEZ VARGAS
TO POLANCO THAT WOUNDED PERSON (MOST PROBABLY ONE OF CAPTORS)

BE PERMITTED TO GO TO AN EMBASSY AND RECEIVE MEDICAL CARE. I EXPLAINED THAT WE FOUND THIS REQUEST AN OPPORTUNITY TO NEGOTIATE THE FREEDOM OF THE THREE WOMEN IN EXCHANGE. I SUGGESTED THAT IF SUCH A DEAL COULD BE ARRANGED I WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECEIVE WOUNDED PERSON AT MY RESIDENCE. PRESIDENT AGREED THAT POLANCO SHOULD TRY THIS, PROVIDED PERSON CONCERNED WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE SUBSEQUENTLY IMMUNE TO DOMINICAN JUSTICE. FOR THIS REASON HE WISHED ONLY THE AMERICAN EMBASSY INVOLVED SINCE HE KNEW THAT WE DID NOT OFFER ASYLUM UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES. PRESIDENT ALSO THOUGHT THAT IF CAPTORS BALKED AT RELEASING HUTCHISON (AS IS LIKELY), DEAL COULD BE MADE FOR RELEASE OTHER TWO WOMEN AS FINAL OFFER. IF CAPTORS REFUSED, PRESIDENT SAID, THE FATE OF THE WOUNDED PERSON WOULD BE RESPONSIBILITY OF CAPTORS.

(E) PRESIDENT THEN CASUALLY SAID THAT AS LONG AS POLANCE WAS NEGOTIATING POLANCO MIGHT SAY THAT THE THREE DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES HAD, AFTER CONSIDERABLE EFFORT, PERSUADED PRESIDENT TO GUARANTEE LIVES OF CAPTORS AND THAT THE THREE DIPLOMATS STOOD BEHIND THE GODR'S GUARANTEE. PRESIDENT CONTINUED THAT HE WAS PREPARED AS A SECOND AND LATER STEP TO OFFER THE CAPTORS SAFE CONDUCT TO A COUNTRY THAT WOULD RECEIVE THEM, BUT UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WERE WE TO SAY ANYTHING CONCERNING SECOND STEP POSSIBILITY TO ANYONE INCLUDING POLANCO. PRESIDENT CLEARLY INDICATED THAT HE DID NOT INTEND TO GO BEYOND "BANGKOK SOLUTION" FOR HE THOUGHT THAT ACCEDING TO ANY OF KIDNAPPERS DEMANDS SERVED ONLY TO PROLIFERATE TERRORISM AND PUT LIVES OF OTHER DIPLOMATS IN DANGER.

2. PRESIDENT CONTINUES TO CHARACTERIZE CAPTORS AS "YOUNG GROUP OF PUBLICITY SEEKERS" WHO UNDERSTAND THAT THEIR LIVES DEPEND UPON WELFARE OF HOTAGES. WHEN I RECOUNTED IN DETAIL PSYCHIATRIC OPINION WHICH DEPT HAD HELPFULY PROVIDED, BALAGUER LISTENED INTENTLY AND REPLIED THAT MENDEZ VARGAS PROBABLY WAS A "LOCO" BUT PRESIDENT HAD NEVER DETECTED ANY SUICIDAL TENDENCIES IN HIM AND THEREFORE HE WANTED TO LIVE AS MUCH AS ANYONE ELSE. AT ANY RATE, THE PRESIDENT CONTINUED, MENDEZ VARGAS SEEMED TO BE THE CALMEST OF THE CAPTORS (A VIEW WHICH COINCIDES WITH REPORTS REACHING US).

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3. PRESIDENT SEEMS VERY RELAXED AND CONFIDENT THAT ALL WILL TURN OUT WELL, WHILE ADMITTING SOMETHING UNEXPECTED COULD OCCUR.

4. IT WAS AGREED NOTHING WOULD BE SAID TO PRESS ABOUT THE AGREED-ON APPROACH, THAT POLANCO WOULD MAKE OFFER IN COURSE OF REGULAR FOOD RUN, AND THAT HE SHOULD MAKE IT IN EARSHOT OF SEVERAL OF MENDEZ VARGAS COLLEAGUES. WHEN POINT WAS MADE RE POSSIBLE DANGER TO POLANCO IN ENTERING CONSULATE,

BALAGUER STATED THAT MENDEZ VARGAS OWED LIFE TO POLANCO.
THE MONSEÑOR, HE NOTED, WAS THE ONE WHO HAD PREVAILED ON
BALAGUER TO RELEASE MENDEZ VARGAS LAST JAN.

5. I AM SEEKING AN APPOINTMENT WITH POLANCO FOR ABOUT 3 P.M.
ON BEHALF OF THE THREE OF US TO INFORM AND DISCUSS WITH HIM

THE FOREGOING IN ORDER THAT WE MAY POSSIBLY SET THE
NEGOTIATIONS IN MOTION WHEN POLANCO DELIVERS FOOD AND DRINK
DURING THE LATTER PART OF THE DAY.
HURWITCH

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